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## **Question Time: Alternate methods of taxation**

**If you were in charge, how would you collect?**

**By Rob Burgess**  
**Tribune night editor**

[**Editor's note:** To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

Wednesday was Tax Day 2015, the deadline for Americans to submit their income taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. (You did remember to do your taxes, didn't you?) So, we wanted to know: "If you were in charge, how would you go about collecting income tax? The same as now, or something else? Or none at all? Why?"

### **Your answers**

"I would just ask everyone to pay \$4000 and 20 hours of community service." — **Corey Barrett**

"It really does not matter. Once you started whatever system, the legislatures would change it to favor whatever special interest or interests won out." — **Kenneth Birkemeier**

“The U.S. tried not having a federal income tax for its first 125 years or so (states always had them) until the 16th Amendment and financed wars and such with some ridiculously high tariffs and ill-advised international loans. A federal income tax was a big populist cause for decades, often alongside the temperance movement. It was a cornerstone of William Jennings Bryan's many presidential campaigns.” — **Glenn Birkemeier**

### **Our answers**

“If some doofus put me in charge, I'd advise them to have their head examined, for starters. Then I'd rip the income tax out of the IRS tax code, likely triggering mass panic among government agency leaders. But in all seriousness, it doesn't make sense (other than from a ‘how else can the money realistically be raised?’ standpoint) to tax income. A tax on a behavior generally discourages that behavior — think about the ‘sin tax’ on cigarettes. Instead of discouraging people from earning honest incomes, I think the government would be better served by a value-added tax similar to what many European countries have implemented.” — **Sarah Einselen**

“There'd be a lot less avenues for people — and more importantly businesses — to find ways to lessen their charges. Being so needlessly complicated spawns a cottage industry which just drains funds from both the taxpayer and the government.” — **Pedro Velazco**

“I have no idea about the particulars, but if we could go back to making the marginal income tax rate for those making over \$400,000 something closer to 92 percent like it was during the Eisenhower administration, it’d be a start. (It’s around 35 percent right now.)” — **Rob Burgess**

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